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Doc. 1

HSCA Interview w/ Joseph Piccolo, 11 August 1978

On August 11, 1978 at 2:00 p.m. Dan Hardway and Charles Berk of the HSCA conducted a two hour interview with Joseph Piccolo, Jr. Mr. Piccolo, ^{age 43,} is presently an employee of the CIA working as an operations officer in the DDO. He joined the CIA in February 1957 and, except for one year of duty with the Air Force ~~THROUGH~~ he continued in his employment with the CIA.

Prior to the beginning of the interview Mr. Piccolo was asked to examine the CIA's omnibus release letter of March 23, 1978. After his examination, Mr. Piccolo indicated that he fully understood the letter's meaning. Mr. Berk then explained to Mr. Piccolo the mandate and purpose of the HSCA.

Mr. Piccolo stated that at the time of JFK's assassination he was a support assistance analyst in the DDO. His responsibilities included maintenance of records, running of traces, and

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(2)

Spanish language analysis for purposes of operational support. Subsequent to this position, Mr. Piccolo undertook training during the Spring of 1964 to become an operations officer. Mr. Piccolo further stated that his professional areas of interest were mainly ~~concerned~~ Latin America. He also indicated that he served at [the] [CIA's] Mexico City Station from December 1957 - January 1960 and from August 1965 to January 1968. It was further ascertained that Mr. Piccolo was involved in some Agency operations directed against Cuba during the time periods 1962 - January 1968 ~~1969~~, January 1969 - Jan 1970 and for a 3 month period during 1975. Mr. Piccolo was asked he was familiar with the cryptonym ^{CIA/H} AMMUS/1. He responded affirmatively and stated that A/H was the first COIS defector from the ~~the~~ newly formed DSI, the CIA's Cuba counterpart for external security and counter-intelligence operations.

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Mr. Piccolo stated that he did not participate in the initial handling and debriefing of A/I but became involved in the case during the summer of 1964 when he first met A/I. At that time, Mr. Piccolo was assigned to "handle" A/I, i.e., to ensure that A/I was properly accommodated and to provide ~~companionship~~ ^{escorted} for A/I. * (over) late

Mr. Piccolo [REDACTED] became responsible for debriefing A/I. Mr. Piccolo was not able to recall the exact time period during which he debriefed A/I but believed he debriefed A/I for approximately a four to six month period. Mr. Piccolo stated that [Harold Swenson] Barney Hidalgo and Dan Flores also debriefed A/I. [REDACTED]

Mr. Piccolo was queried as to the responsibilities of W/H/SAT/4, the C/A component responsible for the A/I case. He indicated that this component ^{was debriefed by Harold Swenson} worked against the Cuban Intelligence Services. He further indicated that

ML

DMX

He indicated that he cleaned out
his 4/11 gun to 1900 and the gun
had been sent to the gunner's
room in the gun house and
was never used again.

M. Puccolo recalled that API had been debriefed ^{in Canada} after his defection. He stated that the objectives of the initial debriefings would have been to gain biographic data on persons associated with the Cuban intelligence service and information on persons who might collaborate with the CIA. [REDACTED]

As for the filing of the debriefing reports, Mr. Piccolo said the filing procedure would have been dictated by the manner in which the case was handled i.e. by subject or cryptonym or personality. He did state that debriefing reports would have initially been held in the office handling the case. These reports would have been "held tight" to allow time for operations to be developed ~~ASSISTS INTELLIGENCE~~ while security risks are at a minimum. ~~When~~ ~~Where~~ ~~such~~ reports would now be located, Mr. Piccolo said he did not know. Piccolo indicated that

W/H/SAS/C, to carry out its functions
may have run double agent
operations

Mr. Piccolo was next queried
whether he recalled a CIA
component referred to as the
"domestic exploitation section".

Mr. Piccolo stated that this
terminology was not familiar
to him but that domestic
exploitation would most likely
have been located in a positive
intelligence section of the Agency
such as the Domestic Contacts
Division. However, he did state
that recruitment of a contact
in the country for [redacted]

utilization in foreign opera-
tions would have been
the responsibility of every
operations officer. He [redacted] doubts
that the Western Hemisphere
Division would have run such an
office but that operational
recruitment would have been
handled as part of a specific
project or program.

Mr. Piccolo was queried
whether A/H provided any
information to the CIA on the

Hawey Oswald and his possible contact with the DSI. He responded that he recalls no A/I debriefing reports providing such information nor did A/I provide such information to him. [REDACTED] Mr.

Hedalgo further declared that Moors [Sweden] Hedalgo, and Flores never indicated to him that A/I had ever provided any information on Lee Hawey Oswald.

Mr. Piccolo was next queried as to the meaning of the term "Special Intelligence". He indicated that the term usually applies to the interception of communication e.g. signal intelligence which would include radio waves and radar but would not include electronic surveillance. Mr. Piccolo stated that [REDACTED] special [REDACTED] [REDACTED] special intelligence would have been handled by "Dwain D", a special unit segregated from other agency components.

Mr. Piccolo was next asked if he had ever seen any photographs of Lee Harvey Oswald resulting from the photographic surveillance operation conducted by the CIA Mexico City station. He responded in the affirmative stating that he saw 2 photographs of LHO after entering a lawn in the Cuban Embassy/Consulate in Mexico City. The first photograph was a $3\frac{1}{4}$ full shot of LHO exposing his left profile as LHO looks downward. The second photograph which Mr. Piccolo recollects seeing was a back & the head view of LHO.

At this point in the interview Mr. Piccolo was shown WCE 237, the famous photo of the Mexico City Mystery Man. All printed identification ~~bordering~~ the photograph were covered prior to Mr. Piccolo's examination.

Mr. Piccolo was then asked who the man in WCE 237 was. Mr. Piccolo responded that he did not know but that the

person was not Lee Harvey Oswald. Mr. Piccolo was next shown a ^{full frontal} ~~full frontal~~ read photograph of LHO. This photograph also had all imprinted material ~~blurred~~ blurring its surface covered. When asked ~~if~~ who the person in the photograph was, after a moment's pause, Mr. Piccolo ^{correctly} identified ~~as~~ Lee Harvey Oswald as the person in the photograph.

[REDACTED] Mr. Piccolo explains the circumstances ~~in~~ under which he viewed the above-referenced photographs. He recalled that the photos were from the Mexico City Station surveillance section but could not recall if he saw the photographs at HQs or in Mexico City. He indicated that he had previously heard "through the grape-vine" that such photographs had been found. He further stated that approximately 2-4 weeks prior to the date of this interview Mr.

[Dan Nescium]⁰³ had told Mr. Piccolo that Charlotte Bustos had found a photograph of LHO. Mr. Piccolo assumed that [Mr.⁰³ Nescium] had ~~known~~ ^{the gal at the newspaper} become aware of Ms. Bustos' discovery, through [Mr.⁰³ Nescium] research into the Oswald case.

Finally Mr. Piccolo speculated that any photos from Mexico City surveillance operation would have been sent to head-quarters & that he presumed someone would have found the LHO photograph at head-quarters.

Mr. Piccolo was next asked ^{whether he is acquainted with} ~~whether he is acquainted with~~ the following people (response indicated)

- 1) George Wetmore - no
- 2) Douglas Ellington - no
- 3) David Phillips yes
- 4) E. Howard Hunt yes, but not well
- 5) Maurice Bishop no
- 6) F. W. Crozier no
- 7) Antonio Veciana no
- 8) [Stanley⁰³ Watson] yes, ^{Departs} _{my} ^{Chq} _{station}
- 9) Claire Bonnotra yes, ^{in my} _{Embassy} _{from} ^{Dept. of State}
- 10) Silvia Duran no ^{recollection} _{to}

(8)

- 11) Manuel Calvillo - no
- 12) Anne Goodpasture yes, (over)
- 13) LIRW 6/3 - yes, but can recall no more
- 14) Mr. Scott - yes; Mr. Piccolo was queried whether Mr. Scott maintained a personal safe in Mexico City while he was Chief of Station there. Mr. Piccolo responded that restricted materials would have been kept in a safe. Mr. Piccolo ~~as~~ defined restricted materials as being very sensitive, ~~material~~ i.e. not finding it way not routine file. Mr. Piccolo stated that he does not know who would have had access to such a safe.

~~Mr. Piccolo was next shown a 4/1 DeRiffer report dated 18 May 1964 concerning the duties of DSI officers in the field regarding use of appli-~~

2) knew her as Wm Scott's assistant - she might have found the LHO photographs

(9)

Mr. Piccolo was next asked if he could identify the function of the CIA component C/1/S16. He responded that it was his belief that C/1/S16 dealt w/ ciphers because the designation seemed to imply it was a Special Intelligence Group or a Signal Intelligence Group.

At this point in the interview Mr. Piccolo was asked to examine a 5 May 1964 CIA declassification report of A/I regarding

A/I's knowledge of LHO's possible contacts with the DSI. Mr. Piccolo stated that he does not recall ever seeing the ~~memorandum~~ of the information contained in it. He had no recollection of Rogelio Rodriguez, Luisa Calderon, and his recollection of Manuel Vega was poor.

Mr. Piccolo was next asked to examine a 7 May 64 CIA memorandum prepared by [Harold Swanson] which elaborate on A/I's knowledge of LHO and the JFK assassination.

NC

JK

Mr. Puccio was interviewed by A. J. /
had ~~been~~ been recalled in
during his polygraph examination
about his knowledge of it. /
Mr. Puccio advised he did not know
that he did not see the polygraph
rackets but does recall that a person
were present during the polygraph
session.

Mr. Puccio stated that he had never seen this memorandum and that it did not refresh his recollection regarding Luisa Calderon.

Mr. Piccolo was then asked if he could define a Black Tape 201 file. He stated that [redacted] such a file has been retired and is black typed to hide either an operational relationship or other sensitive matters.

This file is enveloped and sealed. He indicated that [REDACTED] a memo trace should indicate if a file has been blacktaped. Moreover, he stated that it would be a very rare occurrence for an agent ^{file} to be maintained on a soft file basis.

Mr. Piccolo was next asked to examine CIA debriefing no. 65 of A/1 pertaining to the duties of a DSI officer in the field regarding visa applicants. Mr. Piccolo [redacted] did not recall ever reviewing this report. He indicated that

The report appeared accurate. He further stated the DG1 used extensive consulate cover in its operations. Mr. Piccolo stated that he believed Eusebio Aguirre, former Cuban Consul in Mexico City, to have been a DG1 [redacted] officer.

Mr. Piccolo was queried concerning his knowledge of the designation 2R. Specifically, he was asked what significance the notation 2R [redacted] had when placed next to the names of DG1 officers Merabal & Vega as occurs in a 30 April 64 excerpt from CIA debriefing report of A/I. Piccolo stated that the 2R probably stood for 2RICK, a project designed to identify clandestine Cuban intelligence network.

Mr. Piccolo next examined a 17 July 1964, CIA contact report written by himself. Mr. Piccolo verified his authorship of the contact report and further stated that the Cuban defector AMNIP/1 identified in the report had been a Cuban 6-2 agent.

who defected in 1962-1963. Mr. Piccolo further indicates that the photographs examined by A/1 and HMMW 19/1, as reported in the contact report, probably originated with the LION/10 ^{surveillance} operation.

Mr. Piccolo next [REDACTED] asked to detail his knowledge of Teresa Proenza Proenza. He stated that she was related to the manager of Cudana Airlines in Mexico. He further declared that he had no knowledge that Proenza had ever been associated with the CIA but did admit that she had been of operational interest to the Agency. He did not know if she had been a target for recruitment by the CIA. However Mr. Piccolo declines to discuss further Ms Proenza's relationship with the CIA unless HSCA could [REDACTED] demonstrate the relevance of the questioning.

Finally, Mr. Piccolo was asked to examine CIA despatch HMMW -11935, 1 September 1963, regarding ^{Yusua} Calderon. Mr. Piccolo indicated that the

designation then of SAS/EOB
represented Cuban Task Force/
External Operations Branch.
EOB, he stated operated outside
of Cuba. Furthermore, Mr. Piccolo
stated that he knew the author
of the dispatch, Dave Ronis, whom
he stated had retired from the
CIA.

Q Who would have handled special intelligence -

A Staff D or Division D

Q Was it FI staff

A No, it would have been a special group

HTLINSUL would have been separate

from Division D - it was on C1 staff

In Mex - Aug 65 - Jan 68

(" 57 - 60)

600-65 } in HQ

was involved in B. Ops - oper '15 support
at HQ

prepared names,
arrest'd operational officers

Did not know George Witter

" " Grupton

Did not know Dave Phillips

" " Hunt but not well

Did not know Maurice Bishop

" Crozer

" McCiana

Did not know (Stanley Watson) Psychiat.

" " Boonstra - Dept. of State

When in Mex was assigned to Cuban
section of MACV Sta

He has heard that Mex had

photo of LHO - after assas.

but saw copy of photo from MACV Sta

1/22/65
4/22/65
4/23/65

✓ photo of LtHo entering or exiting
Cuban Embassy was taken

✓ looking downward - left profile
this was famous LtHo photo

✓ 3/4 fullshot

✓ saw 2 photos

✓ other was back of head

✓ says he saw photo of man 6'3'
250 lbs, short hair - wouldn't

✓ know it wasn't LtHo

Knew Charlotte Bustos

✓ he heard before ITSCA publicity
that C.B had found a photo

✓ ran surveillance ops in Mex

✓ helped the agent who ran the
operation -
was called LION/ON

[⁰³ Dan] ~~████████~~ - [⁰³ Niesciur]

✓ said Charlotte Bustos had found a
photo

✓ assumed [⁰³ PW] found it through
his research into the case

✓ Doesn't recall S. Dwan

✓ ~~████████~~ has heard Liring/3 but
can't recall ~~████████~~ anything

✓ doesn't recall Manuel Calvillo

Dan asks again about LHO photo

✓ says picture he saw quite a few years ago - was LHO going into Cuban Embassy - wasn't Soviet Embassy

"The gal at Mexi desk found it"

✓ knew Ann Goodpasture - not positive but she might have found LHO photo - knew her as Win Scott Hass - no specific CI duties but worked in this area

Win Scott had a safe where

✓ stored materials

✓ best cos encountered in Agency would have kept restricted materials in the safe - very sensitive stuff that wouldn't find its way into sensitive files

✓ doesn't know who had access to safe

for 2 days

✓ visa would be

wanted

✓ would be getting quick visa if

not known or id'd as CIA agent

✓ would need proof of who you are - if had valuable intelligence material would be different,

never heard of Mollabay mining Co.

for expedition¹⁰⁵

visa
to S. U.

member of CP

agent

person of interest to S. U.

" " to Block country

